PART I.

THE OMAHA DAILY BEE.

PAGES 1-8.

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THE BEE BUILDING.

A Magnificent Structure Dedicated to the Art Preservative.

PALATIAL AND SUBSTANTIAL.

The Largest Fire Proof Newspaper Office in America.

A COURT OF RARE BEAUTY.

Massive Monument of Granite, Marble, Brick and Iron.

ACRES OF ELEGANT ROOMS.

A Masterly Architectural Design, Brilliant in Conception and Perfect in Execution—Modern Equipments.

Eighteen years ago to-day THE BEE made its advent in Omaha. The anniversary of its birth is made the occasion of the formal opening of its new and permanent home. The completion of this grand structure, which has been in process of erection for nearly two years, is a memorable event, not only in the career of THE BEE, but in the history of Omaha.

The building occupies two full lots each 66x132 feet with a frontage of 132 feet on Farnam, the principal business street of Omaha, and 132 feet on Seventeenth street, being a plat of ground one-fourth of the entire square which fronts the Douglas county court house and adjoins immediately the new city hall building now in process of of construction. The project of erecting this structure had long been contemplated by the editor of THE BEE. It took a tangible form two years ago this month, when S. S. Beman, the eminent office architect of Chicago, who has made a national reputation by designing and carrying to completion the great Pullman building of that city, and the superb life insurance building in Milwaukee, was engaged to prepare the design and plans. Excavation was begun in September, 1887, and work upon the foundations commenced on October 10. The instructions given to Mr. Beman were briefly these: The building was to be substantial and imposing, without gingerbread ornamentation. It was required to be fireproof, with perfect light and ventilation secured through a central court under a glass dome above the building.

This building, now about completed, may well take its place in the foremost rank of the best business structures of this age of boundless resources, and from its solidity of construction and severity of outline and detail and general massive effect, bids fair to stand as an example for the future. In the designs the architect seems not to have been trammeled by any arbitrary architectural style, but has adopted the early Italian Romanesque forms and spirit with a happy result to the manifold requirements of a modern business building, at once maintaining the simple, massive dignity which characterizes this style, along with the maximum of light so essential to a structure designed for office purposes. No expense has been spared to make the building, in point of convenience, strength, fire proof quality, perfect plumbing, heating and sanitary features, the best obtainable.

The basement, which is entirely above ground, and the first floor are built of a jasper-like brilliant red granite, from Waupaca, Wis., which in its texture and color is pronounced equal to the Scottish granite. This is treated in rock faced finish for the most part with a strong buttressed effect at corners, with bee-hives carved in the granite pilasters above each corner. The eleven polished massive pillars of this material which adorn the main fronts are conceded by people who have traveled abroad to excel in beauty and variegation of colors any marble or granite used in the European capitals.

The superstructure above is of brown obsedian pressed brick, trimmed with terra cotta to correspond in color, and brown stone, moulded brick and carved terra cotta embellishments are used with good effect. To break the effect of the long lines of windows, the central portion of the Farnam street front is surmounted by an eighth story, extending sixty feet, and above this two smaller turrets rise to a height of 115 feet above the sidewalk. Between the turrets a terra cotta panel, in plain Roman letters, bears the inscription, "The Bee Building." A frieze of obsidian brick, with tracery hand-carved in graceful lines surmounts the completed walls. The six turrets are tiled with terra cotta.

The substantial exterior appearance of the building is sustained throughout by its general construction. The foundation walls laid in Portland cement range from three to five feet in thickness with assisting piers eight feet thick. At the parapet, above the eighth story, they are still twenty inches in thickness. The main brick piers above the granite walls are built around iron columns which give auxiliary strength independent of the walls themselves.

The main entrance is on Farnam street, by a granite arched portal of noble dimensions, flanked on either side by lesser arches, which form the windows of the landings of the marble staircase. On entering the building one is at once struck with the beauty and thoroughness of every detail. The grand marble staircase at the main entrance leads to the first or principal story where the counting room of THE BEE is located. The beautiful wrought iron screen work of the elevator system and the handsome electro-bronze stair case surrounding the elevator; the richly tiled halls and marble wainscoting; and, beyond all this, the glimpse through the great arches of the imposing central court, which diffuses light through the central part of the building, all combine to impress the beholder most favorably.

A beautiful as well as useful feature, in fact the feature of the building, is this great central court, with its colonades, arcades and highly monumental effect. Every detail of ornament has been carefully designed and the rich ornamentation of the stucco work of arches, caps and columns, produces an extremely agreeable effect. The interior of this building is rendered so attractive by the court that one is inclined to linger there and stroll through its wide and well-lighted corridors, always finding something pleasant to the eye and inspiring to the mind.

The court starts from the ground floor at street level and rises to a height of 120 feet. It is covered at the top with a clear plate glass skylight, supported by graceful wrought-iron trusses. From the court at the basement access is obtained to the several offices in the basement, but these offices have entrance from the streets as well.

The court, forty-three feet square, is divided on each side into three bays by pilasters extending to the third floor. The pilasters in the basement story have simple, moulded, classic caps on which lies an entablature composed of architrave, frieze and cornice, the frieze being paneled with circular and diamond shaped panels, while the cornice is ornamented with a dentil ornament. Immediately on top of this entablature rises another pilaster which extends through the first and second stories, while on the top of the same appears a semicircular arch around the third story, the whole being crowned by a richly molded modillion cornice, the spandrels on top of the arches having an interlaced Moorish fretwork. The arches again rest on capitals molded with great delicacy, with French detail ornament.

The fourth and fifth stories are somewhat plainer, but have very effective lines of molded cornices and sill-courses carried around the court.

The upper, or sixth, story has a double row of pilasters, one set being wide and forming a continuation of the main pilasters from below, while the other set forms a mullion between the windows. The pilasters in this story have capitals moulded and ornamented in the same feeling as are the lower ones. Over these openings are semicircular arched heads with a label moulding. The label moulding is rich in effect, with a dentil or tooth moulding.

The whole court is crowned with a deep frieze and dentil cornice, while in this frieze are some circular openings.

Over the court is an iron frame of the plate glass grate which, assisted by the cross lights of the different stories, affords sufficient and ample light. In the second and third stories a corridor passes around the court behind the main pilasters. Between the latter are handsome balconies, outlined with bronze and iron balusters. The bronze balusters are in the second, with a beautiful design of wrought iron scroll work in the third story.

Night light is supplied by electricians placed at convenient distances, the effect of which will be to greatly enhance the detail ornament of the plaster work.

The court is unique in itself, forming a most pleasing feature of the handsome building, and giving a cross light to every portion of it, there being no dark corner in any part of the interior.

Ventilation has been given a most careful consideration, and although the glass covering has a tendency to promote heat, the interior of the court is cool and pleasant, owing to the free current of air created by the large ventilator in the glass roof, and which passes from the top to the bottom of the court.

The general architectural feeling of the court is truly French. There are displayed great delicacy of moulding and great refinement of finish and general execution. There can be no doubt that this court will compare most favorably with any similar piece of work in this country and that it is a credit, both to the originator and designer, while the work has lost nothing of refinement in its execution.

It is designed in the future to further embellish the court with an artistic fountain, and while the court now presents the snow-white and chaste color of the stucco work, its general tone will be softened and improved by a judicious tinting of the walls in soft warm colors in the near future, when the building and work has become perfectly settled and seasoned.

From the court at the basement floor is a fine, broad flight of marble steps leading to a series of offices fronting west in the first story.

All of the halls of the building are laid with the best encaustic tiles, of pleasing color and patterns, and the bases of the hal walls are of marble.

The building is finished throughout in antique oak, highly polished.

The hardware is unique in design and of Bower Balff iron. Crystalized plate glass is used for the doors and transoms opening on the corridors. All the window glass throughout the building is the best heavy plate, and all floors are laid with selected narrow yellow pine, and a large number of offices have hardwood border of walnut.

The plumbing system is the best that modern skill can make it, particular attention having been given the sanitary aspect of this important branch of the building. All the offices are supplied with running water and Italian marble basins. Every floor has its separate toilet rooms for ladies and gentlemen, all well lighted and ventilated.

The building is heated by steam and lighted by electricity, and provided with beautiful combination fixtures for either gas or electric light.

All the partitions, furring, floors, arches, etc., are of fire clay, tiled, and all the structural work, such as girders, floor beams, columns, etc., are of the heaviest iron. There is not a dark room in the building, every office being perfectly lighted and ventilated.

While the construction makes every room, practically a fire proof vault, there are seventy-four separate vaults in various parts of the building.

The roof is not only absolutely water proof, but impregnable to fire from within or without. The steel beams which support it cross each other transversely, twelve inches apart. In the spaces between these rails are inserted hollow book tile, three inches and a half in diameter, which in turn are covered with a layer of concrete an inch and a half thick, and five thicknesses of sheet asphaltum. On top of these half an inch of Portland cement is spread, and in this cement are bedded glazed vitrified paving bricks, laid flat, with cement between the joints. The weight of the roof is computed at 375 tons. It resembles a paved roadway and would make a safe drive for a score of loaded drays.

Two fast-running passenger elevators, supplied with the most modern appliances for safety and convenience, are provided, besides a large freight elevator at the rear. Surrounding the passenger elevators is a beautiful electro-bronze staircase, and there is an additional stairway in connection with the freight elevator.

THE BEE ESTABLISHMENT.

Detailed Description of Its New Quarters.

The sub-basement of the building furnishes ample room for the vast machinery required to run the printing presses, and to furnish heat, light and elevator power for the building. The sub-basement is the full size of the building, 126 feet square within the main walls and extends under the sidewalks on the Seventeenth street side. The space is divided into three parts for the accommodation of the engine, boiler and electric dynamo rooms. The boiler room adjoins the dynamo room and the engines and elevator machinery. The boiler room is floored with cement, the engine room with stone tiling and the electric light department with hard wood.

The boiler room is 38 feet wide, 41 feet long with a 19 foot ceiling, affording ample light and ventilation. On the east of the boiler room and extending under the sidewalks are vaults with a capacity of 100 tons for the storing of coal. The boilers, are three in number, of the Baker & Smith make, each 18 feet in length and 60 inches in diameter, and have capacity for supplying an engine of 200-horse power, a third more than is needed for the heating, elevator and electric appliances in the entire building. Each boiler is supplied with a Kirkwood rocking and dumping grate, a convenience in the matter of tending a furnace and an economizer of fuel. The boilers are so arranged that any one or all of them can be used for any purpose. Connected with them are two drums, one high pressure for power purposes, and one low pressure for heating, the drums being connected by a 7-inch pipe and a Davis automatic pressure regulator by which any amount of steam from one pound to boiler pressure may be used for the heating system. The exhaust pipes from the engine are connected with the low pressure drum with a back pressure valve which allows the pressure to escape when the exhaust is greater than is required for the heating of the building. There are 16,000 square feet of radiation in the building, supplied from this low pressure drum. The steam heating is accomplished by the one pipe system, with the latest improvements, by which the returns are carried direct to a receiving tank, or returned to the tank by a system of traps. From the receiving tank the water is sent by two Worthington duplex boiler feed pumps, direct to the boilers or to the supply tanks in the pent house in the top of the building. The heat for the building is taken from the low pressure drum through the building by forty steam risers all with direct connections with the source of supply so that any riser can be shut off without affecting the supply in the other pipes.

The power for the heating, printing, and electric lighting is furnished by two magnificent Corliss engines manufactured by the Hoffman & Billings company of Milwaukee. The smaller engine has a 12x36 inch cylinder and is rated at 80-horse power. The drive wheel is 10 feet in diameter, has a 22 inch face and weighs 11,000 pounds. This supplies the power for the presses, stereotyping apparatus, paper wetting machine, plate elevator and day dynamo. The larger engine has a 16x44-inch cylinder, and is rated at 150 horse power. The driver is 11 feet in diameter, has a 28-inch face, and weighs 17,000 pounds. This monster machine is used only for the operation of the electric machinery, although the engines are so arranged that both or either of them can be used for any of the purposes required. A hot water supply tank furnishes hot water for all of the plumbing fixtures throughout the building. The exhaust from this tank is so piped that it runs direct or is pumped into a Colles patent feed water heater, 30 inches in diameter and 10 feet in length, from which it is sent direct to the boilers.

The engine fixtures and properties are of the most approved patterns. The belts are endless and rivetless and regulated with the Eclipse Pulley company's friction clutch pulley and belt fasteners.

The entire building is lighted by incandescent electric lights furnished by one of the most complete plants of its size in existence. The power is supplied by three dynamos of the United States Electric Light company's patent. Two of the dynamos have power each for supplying 600 16-candle power lamps, and the small one supplies 300 lamps. The larger dynamos run at 800 revolutions per minute, while the small one executes 1,050 revolutions per minute. The machines are self-regulating, so that any number of lights may be turned off without affecting the balance. The switchboard, from which the lights are operated is a model of mechanical ingenuity. It is supplied with an ampere meter by which the number of lights in use is registered; an indicator for registering the candle power of lamps in use through the building; a balance to make each circuit bear the same power; a potential indicator to register the candle power of each lamp and a ground detector to locate ground on any part of the system. Connected with the system is a plug switch, the use of which is to keep a proper voltage on each circuit. The building is wired up and down from a central distributing point on the third floor and is divided into eight main branch circuits. By this arrangement in case of accident to one part of the circuit, only one-eighth of the number of lamps in the building would be disturbed. Separate cut outs are also supplied for each room in the building. The building is wired with braided oconite wire, with proper cut outs for all damp places. Each dynamo is supplied with a pilot light, which burns only when the dynamo is running, and they are arranged to run singly or together. The plant furnishes over fifteen hundred lights for the building, and this number can easily be increased. To the credit of the company putting in the plant it may be stated that with all the thousands of feet of wire necessary for supplying the building with lamps, and the various appliances for their protection and regulation, every detail was so carefully observed in the construction of the plant that when the power was turned on everything worked perfectly. Connected with the dynamo and operated from it is a pony motor used for running the blower of the pneumatic tubes that connect the editorial rooms with the various departments of the paper.

The machinery used for the operation of the elevator service is on a par in point of completeness with that used for other purposes in the building. For the passenger service, two Crane passenger elevators are used, each having a cylinder 30 inches in diameter and 11 feet in length. These are supplied with water from a tank in the pent house on the top of the building. This tank is ten feet wide, sixteen feet long and sixteen feet deep, and is discharged by the operation of the elevator into a tank of similar size in the sub-basement from which the water is pumped back to the upper tank by a Worthington compound duplex pump and is governed automatically by a float in the tank. On the north side of the building an immense Crane freight elevator is furnished power by a cylinder thirty-six inches in diameter and weive feet in length, and is operated in the same manner as the passenger elevators. These elevators are speedy, noiseless and absolutely safe. A one horse power elevator, used to carry the stereotyping plates from the sixth floor to the press rooms in the basement, is a Crane's patent screw elevator and is run by rope transmission.

Press and Mailing Room.

The location of the press room is a new departure from usage in metropolitan dailies. Instead of setting the presses underground, as has been customary, a space 30x75 feet was set apart on the northwest corner of the ground floor divided by a partition. In one of these rooms the two lightning presses of THE BEE are in full operation, while the other room, with access directly to the mail wagon on the 20-foot alley, is used as the mailing room.

The ground floor, on which the press room is located, rests on 12-inch steel beams, arched with brick and covered with a bed of concrete. This support would have been ample, but in order to render the vibration incidental to the rotation of presses harmless to the walls of the buildings, separate walls, resting upon the ground in the sub-basement, and running transversely between the steel beams, up to a level of eight inches above the first floor, were constructed. Upon these walls the frames of the presses rest and support the entire weight. The result is that the presses are comparatively noiseless and run without the least contact with the main walls of the building.

With its five windows on one side and three transoms looking directly into the court, the press room is as light as the composing room, and will require no artificial lighting between daybreak and sundown.

Another feature of this press room is that there is no overhead shafting or belting. The belts that connect with the main shaft come up from the engine room in the sub-basement through the floor over the main pulleys.

Two large vaults, connected directly with the press room, furnish ample facilities for the storage of inks, lubricating oils and tools needed in the press room.

Directly in the rear of the press room is a broad passageway leading to the freight and plate elevators—the former, down to the paper storage vaults in the sub-basement; the latter, up to the stereotyping room. The freight elevator also can be utilized for sending up large numbers of plates from the press room whenever they accumulate.

Two Scott web-perfecting presses are employed. These magnificent machines each have a capacity of 12,000 eight-page and 24,000 four-page papers per hour. They were built expressly for THE BEE by C. Potter & Co. at their factory at Plainfield, N. J.

These two presses have a capacity of 24,000 eight-page or 48,000 four-page papers per hour, printed, folded, pasted and counted.

The press room is in charge of Fred Youngs, who commenced his career as pressman at THE BEE office about ten years ago.

As has been stated above, the mailing room is practically an annex of the press room. It is well lighted by windows on two sides and transoms on a third side. The mailing clerk is in position to throw the papers upon the wagons in the alley. A new feature has also been introduced in this department. Ordinarily mailing tables are merely planks nailed to wooden frames. In this room the tables are polished marble slabs resting upon frames of wrought iron. The advantage of these is that the tables are indestructible by fire and their perfect smoothness greatly facilitates the work of wrapping. Besides this, such mailing tables can be cleared of all paste which adheres to wood.

The magnitude of the work performed in the mailing-room will be readily appreciated when it is stated that nearly 110,000 copies of THE BEE are stamped and mailed there every week. This does not include the papers delivered in Omaha, South Omaha, Council Bluffs and Lincoln, nor the papers sold at the news stands throughout the city and upon all out-going trains.

Every morning 10,000 copies of the paper are stamped, wrapped and mailed, and on Sunday morning 12,000 copies go through that process. Every Wednesday the weekly edition has to be looked after, which numbers 38,000 to 40,000 papers. On week days about 3,000 copies are expressed to the various newsdealers in this and surrounding states, and 6,000 on Sunday.

Mr. Cliss Butler is the foreman of this department and is an expert in the business, as are the men under him. They have wrapped as many as 100 BEES in one minute, and one of the boys (Somers) has wrapped 1,000 in an hour, including pasting and changing the mail sacks.

The Counting Room.

The ascent of the grand staircase leading to the banking story elevator landing, and a passage through the east corridor ending at the entrance to the counting room is the method of gaining access to the business quarters. The counting room doors are of antique oak, the upper panels of which consist of beveled plate glass, swinging under a large plate glass transom. This room and the private office south of it occupy the entire space embraced in the east side of the banking floor with the exception of about twenty-five feet in the rear. Its extreme width including the public lobby adjoining the counter on the east and reaching to the inner court, is thirty-eight feet. The counting room proper, excluding the private room in front, is more than eighty feet in length and has a minimum width of twenty-four feet and a maximum breadth of thirty-eight feet. The high ceiling is supported by four grand pillars, with Ionic capitals, that spring from about the center line of the room. Five magnificent chandeliers support an artificial lighting capacity of thirty incandescent and a like number of gas jets while ten auxiliary double light incandescent brackets are distributed about the sides of the room. Nine generously dimensioned windows on the Seventeenth street side of the building and three vast glazed openings on the court, with large transoms on the north and south admit daylight. The floor of the counting room is of oak ornamentally bordered by strips of black walnut and oak and the wainscot and other finish is of antique oak. A fifty-foot counter runs from the private room on the south to a junction with the east wall, where it contracts the width of the business office enough to meet the counter at a right angle. It is erected on a base of chocolate marble, supporting the russet Tennessee marble pilasters that are surmounted by a quarter round section of marble of the same color as that of the base lying immediately below the marble crown. Between the pilasters and the upper and lower courses of russet marble which run along the side of the counter are panels of very dark mottled Florentine marble. Above the marble is a very artistically shaped screen worked in Bower Balff iron, and at various intervals in it appear openings for the advertising, subscription and divers other departments. The lobby or public portion of the counting room outside the counter is floored with a mosaic pattern of marble imported from Bergamo, Italy, and wainscoted with very dark mottled Florentine marble, touched off at the edges by the russet colored marble. A pneumatic tube carries copy between the composing room and the business department. Entrance to the rear of the room can be effected from an east and west corridor reached by the grand stairway at the north end of the court. To the right of this rear entrance are two great vaults standing on each side of a passageway leading to a dressing room. The private office or directors' room is 20 feet square, and fronts on Farnam and Seventeenth streets. It is well lighted, floored with quarter sawed oak, the extremities of which are ornate in oak and walnut, and finished in antique oak. This room is without doubt one of the handsomest in the city.

The Editorial Rooms.

A broad tiled corridor, running east and west in front of the elevator landing of the seventh floor, leads to the entrance of the editorial department. The words "Editorial Rooms" are painted in large gilded letters upon the glass panel of the door which opens into the ante-room immediately east of the elevator. This is a spacious chamber supplied with chairs, tables, files of the paper and telephone. Through this room every visitor and every member of the editorial staff is obliged to pass before entering any of the rooms set apart for editors and reporters.

A door on the east opens into the editorial corridor, on either side of which are located the working rooms of the staff. The rooms were designed with special reference to the purposes to which they are now devoted, and, as a consequence, are well lighted and ventilated and supplied with all the conveniences of modern journalism. They are finished in antique oak and supplied with furniture which harmonizes with the wood work.

Turning to the right and crossing the hall, which extends north and south, the visitor enters the suite of the editor in chief. These apartments consist of two rooms, the larger plainly, but tastefully furnished, commanding a magnificent view on both Farnam and Seventeenth streets of two sides of the city. The smaller is the library room.

To the north is the suite of the managing editor, consisting of a working room, to which a private consultation room adjoins.

North of the managing editor's room is that of the city editor. This room is connected with that of the managing editor, and beyond it is the reporters' room, where at almost any hour of the day or night some member of the local force may be found at work. Each reporter is provided with an antique oak table provided with gas jet and electrolier. From this room there is an opening into the composing room by means of which copy may be dropped into the hands of the foreman, both by day and night.

Crossing the hall, is found a spacious room used by the night editor and telegraph editors. This room is occupied by the day proof readers also. It is joined on the south by the room of the news and exchange editors, and between this and the ante-room are other rooms for the editorial writers.

The rooms are supplied with gas and electric bulbs for illuminating purposes, and nearly all of them have marble lavatories of the most modern design.

There are no finer editorial rooms in the world. The west tier of editorial rooms overlook the magnificent court.

The Composing Room.

The composing and stereotyping rooms are located on the seventh floor of the building. They extend over the entire space of 44x128 feet embraced in the area between the Seventeenth street front and the city hall alley. The composing room covers an area of 33,916 feet, being 44 feet in width and 89 feet in length, with a height varying from 17 to 19 feet. It may be reached by ascending the back stairway or the rear elevator through a